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ABSTRACT

In the past, rhetorical criticism relied heavily on an Aristotelian approach; critics judged a speech by how well it fulfilled the speaker's purpose and persuasion was the accepted goal of rhetoric. Political and academic forces have brought about a methodological perspectivism or pluralism of rhetorical theory, and in turn, caused a shift from judging the effectiveness of rhetoric to judging the potential effects of rhetoric. This pluralism produces varied and rigorous criticism because individual critics are allowed to adopt different perspectives. However, though most critics use a variety of methods, overall, their criticism examines rhetoric as a self-contained process of psychosymbolic relationships that excludes the world of affairs. The extrinsic components of rhetoric are ignored in the criticism, thus preventing the union of rhetorical theory and the actual practice of rhetoric. Though rhetors and audiences often make a distinction between rhetoric and reality, the world of affairs does have an effect on rhetoric. For example, the public often assumes that the rhetoric of advertisers, politicians, and newscasters misrepresents the events of the real world, thus the events themselves participate in the rhetoric. Though not all critics need to examine the relationship of the world of affairs to rhetoric, criticism should reflect a variety of epistemological views in order to be consistent with the principles of perspectivism. (SRT)

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Between the Practice of Rhetoric and the World of Affairs: The Missing Link

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Abstract

Between the Practice of Rhetoric and the World of Affairs: The Missing Link

A study of contemporary rhetorical criticism suggests that criticism is more paradigmatic than pluralistic. Notably absent from rhetorical criticism are epistemological perspectives that acknowledge rhetorical objects that are distinct from, but interact with rhetorical subjects. Criticism that is genuinely pluralistic and practical must include critical studies that pursue relationships between the psychosymbolic processes of meaning and the world of affairs.

BETWEEN THE PRACTICE OF RHETORIC AND THE WORLD OF AFFAIRS: THE MISSING LINK

The monthly publication of the Council for Basic Education recently dedicated an entire issue to the ways that the council and others "are moving beyond rhetoric and toward practical goals in redesigning schools and curricula."[1] That issue of Basic Education is appropriately subtitled "Beyond Rhetoric." The Council's use of the term "rhetoric" is typical of how rhetoric is thought about today by the general public: Rhetoric is removed from the world of practical affairs. The field of rhetoric inadvertently promotes the view of rhetoric as contrary to action or what some would call the "real world" by emphasizing the psychosymbolic aspects of rhetoric at the expense of the world of affairs.

Based upon a content analysis of contemporary criticism, the following pages argue that a psychosymbolic perspective dominates critical interpretations of rhetoric.[2] One implication of the monolithic approach to rhetoric is that the pluralism that the field is quick to extol is a restricted pluralism. Different methods of analysis are acceptable for rhetorical analysis as long as critics confine themselves to the psychosymbolic dimensions of rhetoric. More importantly, excluding non-symbolic factors from rhetorical analysis restrains critics from capturing the experience of rhetoric, for in the practice of rhetoric, speakers and listeners assume the presence of a world of affairs beyond, yet relevant to, the rhetorical moment.

The essay unfolds in three parts. The first section provides a brief review of the speech field's dissatisfaction with the neoAristotelian approach to rhetoric as a means of serving the functions of criticism and the subsequent embrace of critical pluralism. The purpose of the historical summary is to establish some of the goals of contemporary critics that are ultimately denied by the psychosymbolic approach. Second, the essay identifies the psychosymbolic paradigm that has replaced the neoAristotelian paradigm, undermining critical pluralism. The final section argues that the functions of criticism can be better served by considering the "relationships" between rhetoric and "the world of affairs." The rhetoric of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in April 1986, serves as an example of how "the world of affairs" is relevant to rhetorical transactions.

I. From Aristotle to Anyone

In the 1960s and early 1970s, while civil rights and peace activists were working to overthrow the status quo, rhetorical critics were holding a revolution of their own. The revolution to overthrow the status quo in critical studies was a peaceful one. The Aristotelian approach to criticism was replaced with what came to be known as "pluralistic" criticism, characterized by the scholarly tolerance of diverse methods of critical analysis.

The neoAristotelian approach to criticism distinguished the rhetorical critic from all other critics in the period between 1925, when Wichelns introduced rhetorical criticism to twentieth century America, and the 1960s.[3] Guided by the Aristotelian paradigm, critics judged a speech by how well it fulfilled the speaker's purpose. Persuasion was the accepted goal of rhetoric. In such terms, rhetoric was simply a means to an end.

There were many motivating forces that caused critics to start doing criticism without Aristotle. The exhortative connotations of rhetoric as persuasion in a time when "persuasion" was linked to politics and indicted for immorality, must have prompted rhetoricians to reconsider the nature of their art. Another force for change was the sophistication of rhetorical criticism as a scholarly endeavor. More than forty years had passed since speech departments separated themselves from english departments. More than thirty years had passed since Wichelns called attention to the differences between rhetorical and literary criticism.

One issue that played an important role in overthrowing neoAristotelian criticism relates to the functions of the critic: "How can critics unite theories of rhetoric and the practice of rhetoric?" Critics were, and still are, conceived as messengers traversing a continuum with rhetorical theorists at one end and practicing rhetors at the other end. The critic brings theorists news about how well their theories describe and guide the making of rhetoric. The critic leaves the theorist with advice for the politician, the advertiser, the film maker, and all those affected

by their rhetoric. If successful the critic should unite the theory and practice of rhetoric.[4]

As early as the 1950s, the field agreed that neoAristotelian interpretations of rhetoric were not very useful in traveling the continuum of criticism. By the mid 1960s rhetorical scholars were well into a critical evaluation of the theories, methods, and functions of rhetorical criticism.[5] Consistently presenting rhetorical events from the same angle, critics argued that the neoAristotelian approach to rhetoric was blinding critics from all of the patterns of thought and behavior induced by a speech and restraining the development of rhetorical theory. Rhetoric, it was agreed, was much more complex than the received view of Aristotle could account for. A 1957 Symposium on the State of the Art of Criticism sponsored by The Western Speech Association suggested several directions that all good critics should pursue, including dramatistic, stylistic, and philosophic studies of discourse.[6]

Changes in criticism were rapid, culminating in the shift from judging the effectiveness of rhetoric to judging the potential effects of rhetoric. No longer an event, beginning in a speaker's intent and ending in the immediate effectiveness of the message, rhetoric was, and still is, celebrated as a complex non-linear process. Edwin Black coined the term "rhetorical transaction" in his influential Rhetorical Criticism in order to capture the complex relationships among the parts of rhetorical communication.[7] "Rhetorical transaction" has since replaced "rhetorical event" as the way of referring to rhetorical communication, and critics have developed and applied more active

and holistic approaches to criticism. In the name of regenerating critical theory and practice, methods for studying movements, genres, dramas, and fantasy themes filled the pages of major publications in the speech field.[8] Today the speech field continues to develop and employ new approaches to the criticism of communication.

So many new critical methods surfaced that Mohramann questioned whether the flurry of critical activity had any direction: "The farther we get from traditional matters, the greater danger that we will forever be Willy Lomans, never knowing who we are."[9] A more positive rendering of the present state of "wandering" is that critics recognize the potential for many interpretations of the same phenomenon, and they are therefore open to a variety of critical methods and assumptions. Fantasy theme analysis, movement criticism, model criticism, generic criticism, and the analysis of narrative structures yield different, but potentially valuable ways of understanding specific discourses.

The trend toward methodological diversity has been sufficient enough to acquire the label "pluralism," and can be understood through Brockriede's discussion of the philosophy of perspectivism.[10] Brockriede initiates his discussion of perspectivism by declaring its focus on relationships: "Perspectivism, like systems theory, recognizes that everything is related to everything else."[11] Accepting the interrelatedness of the components of rhetoric commits a critic to the analysis of how the parts of rhetoric mutually influence one another. For instance, the subject matter of a speech will influence the logic,

which is related to the structure of the speech and the speaker's style. The audience's attitudes, values, belief systems, and judgments of the speaker's logic, credibility, style, and so on, are mutually interactive. Any critic accepting this assumption of interconnectedness must also accept its implication that no act of criticism is ever complete. As meaning is continually born anew, so is criticism.

Perspectivism also entails the assumption of holism. Brockriede contrasts holistic thought to the analytic structure of most Western thought. The neoAristotelian model of rhetoric typifies analytic thinking because it claims to account for the whole of a speech by breaking the speech into a limited number of separate parts, such as logical, ethical, and emotional components. In holistic thought, all of the relationships and dimensions of rhetoric are recognized as vital to understanding a speech, and one critic cannot possibly isolate and account for all of these interrelationships.

Brockriede summarizes the perspectivist's view of communication as a strategy of emphasis.[12] Accordingly, a given critic will focus on the interrelationships of one or two components of rhetoric, without undermining the remaining parts of the whole. Thus, the philosophy of perspectivism invites a plurality of critical approaches to uncover different shadings of a rhetorical phenomenon.[13]

In review, the revolution in criticism was at least partly motivated by the need to simultaneously develop theories of rhetoric and capture the complexity of rhetoric in practice. Critics responded and continue to respond to their new challenge

by developing new methods and theories of rhetoric. Initially, the onslaught of theoretical development may have been a search for Aristotle's replacement but the continuation of theoretical development has become Aristotle's replacement. Scholars defend the present state of critical pluralism through the philosophy of perspectivism. By allowing individual critics to adopt different perspectives, pluralism produces criticism that is varied and rigorous. Theories of rhetoric are constantly reshaped by the flow of critical discoveries. Because perspectivism acknowledges the complexity of rhetorical transactions it is also one way to capture the complex meanings of rhetoric in practice.

II. From an Aristotelian Paradigm to a Psychosymbolic Paradigm

Regardless of the diversity and rigor apparent in rhetorical criticism today, the health of the speech field's pluralism has been questioned. McGee recently claimed that what the speech field extols as pluralism "is nothing more exciting than 'methodological' pluralism."[14] A true perspectivism is not a variety of methods employed to uncover meanings, but rather a logic of rationalization that synthesizes different aspects of meaning into a total understanding.

A careful study of critical essays published in the speech field supports McGee's claim that more is the same than different in criticism today. Rhetorical critics may employ a plurality of

methods but most criticism examines rhetoric as a self-contained process of psychosymbolic relationships. Speech journals rarely contain critical essays that reveal relationships between psychosymbolic processes and a world of affairs. In short, the neoAristotelian paradigm has been replaced by a "psychosymbolic" paradigm of criticism. This section demonstrates the paradigmatic quality of the speech field's "methodological diversity." But first, several concepts must be defined.

The term "paradigm" is herein employed in the sense that Kuhn describes the monolithic character of normal science as "paradigmatic."[15] As the concept is used in this essay, "the psychosymbolic paradigm" is an epistemological view of rhetoric that denies the possibility of an independent "world of affairs" that can be known in rhetoric. "World of affairs" is herein used to encompass a world of knowns, objects, physical, extrinsic, and material processes, and practical actions.[16]

Theoretical and metacritical essays that call for the inclusion of the "world of affairs" in criticism generate much debate about the nature of such a world.[17] The phrase "world of affairs" is objected to on the grounds that it reinforces a web of dualist concepts that philosophers have been trying to reconcile for centuries: knower and known, subject and object, mental and physical, intrinsic and extrinsic, symbolism and materialism, thought and action. Though there are often cries that the dualisms need not exist, their underlying presence reveals itself in discussions about the epistemological nature of rhetoric.[18]

Epistemological discussions place the dualisms into the process of knowing by asking how "subjects" or "knowers" who use

rhetoric capture or create "objects" or "knowns." Cherwitz and Hikins identify the various forms of subjectivism and objectivism held by speech scholars on the nature and role of "objects of knowledge" in rhetoric. In their extreme forms, subjectivists view the objects of discourse as socially constructed realities, and objectivists hold to the view that objects of knowledge exist prior to rhetoric but are discovered through rhetoric.[19] There are many positions between these extreme views that lean toward the tenets of subjectivism and objectivism, but the psychosymbolic interpretations of contemporary critics favor a form of subjectivism that excludes non-symbolic objects from rhetorical processes.[20]

A subjectivist epistemology permeates criticism because critics concentrate upon the knowers or subject's mental, intrinsic, symbolic, thought processes. The study of critical essays found the following variables are iterative in rhetorical criticism: needs, values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, language, intentions, goals, motives, judgments, knowledge, reason, images, and perceptions.[21] There is nothing in this list of variables that is not symbolic or psychological. Though the psychological nature of symbols is widely accepted today, this author employs the somewhat redundant "'psycho' symbolic" in order to call attention to critical concentration on mental processes.[22]

A rather typical example of the mentalist focus of criticism is provided by Bennett's analysis of how the words and images of political campaigns help the public "work out its tensions and satisfy its needs for security, order, leadership, and control over the future."[23] As a whole, critical studies of the 1976,

1980, and 1984 presidential campaigns blatantly ignore such matters as the hostages in Iran and unemployment.[24] Instead, critics reconstruct--construct--deconstruct such symbolic configurations as "the presidency as a rhetorical fiction," "the dominance of gastronomical references in campaigns," and "the degradation rituals of campaigns."[25]

Critics examine social movements, communication about particular issues, novels, films, television shows, and music from the same perspective found in criticism of presidential campaigns. Employing a variety of methods, critics trace the interactions of meaningful relations among aural and visual perceptions, images, attitudes, beliefs, and values. In the spirit of pluralism, though not genuinely pluralistic, criticism is varied and rigorous. Rarely venturing into the world of practical affairs, variety and rigor are restricted to a self-contained process of symbols interacting with symbols,.[26] Interpretations of rhetoric exclude the epistemological possibility that "the world of affairs" is distinct from, yet an integral part of psychosymbolic processes. "The psychosymbolic processes" and "the world of affairs" should become more clear through a demonstration of the plurality of methods that reveal and maintain the "psychosymbolic paradigm."

Metaphors are one aspect of language always of interest to critics. Most metaphorical analyses pass over any connections between words and the world of affairs in favor of psycholinguistic configurations. For instance, Black's "Second Persona" views metaphors as a sign for the human personality.[27] "The 2nd persona" is the label he gives to the audience implied in

rhetoric. Black presents a psychological profile of those persons who may be attracted to the cancer is communism metaphors used by rightist thinkers. Black does not discuss how the actual presence of cancer in society might play a role in the meaning of the metaphor, nor does he disclose some of the ways the metaphors have influenced or could influence the actions of a John Bircher or public policy regarding communist nations.

Osborn's analyses of "Archetypal Metaphors" reveals a connection between the persuasive use of light-dark metaphors as they interact with the experiences and motivations that are "salient in human consciousness."[28] Osborn does not pursue the connections between the light-dark metaphors used by Winston Churchill, for instance, and British policy during WWII.

Blankenship examines the violent metaphors of the 1972 Democratic Nomination and fails to acknowledge tension between a real political happening and the words used by the press to describe the event. Blankenship suggests the events of the campaign are embedded in their metaphors. The campaign was, in Blankenship's terms, "bloody and suicidal."[29]

An alternative to the focus of Blankenship's essay is for the critic to ask questions about how the rhetoric of the campaign connects with the "world of affairs": Can the metaphors be contrasted to actual events, or do they symbolize, signify, or identify events? Has the use of violent metaphors resulted in any particular behavior? Do events oppose, symbolize, identify, or signify one another? There are affirmative answers to these questions, such as violent metaphors may symbolize U.S. policy in

Vietnam, and the presence of violence in busing, crime, and the civil rights movement.

There are many different perspectives on the role of language in meaning, including a word's meaning is found in the thing it names, the set of things it names, the action it evokes, and its relationship to the context of its use.[30] Contemporary rhetorical criticism promotes only the mentalists' view of meaning, which locates word meanings in ideas of the mind.[31] When they view language entirely from the mentalist perspective, critics foster the belief that rhetoric is distinct from action.

Studies in rhetorical genres could potentially reveal how history enters into and interacts with rhetoric, since genres emerge through time.[32] Most genre studies, however, simply introduce systems for classifying communication. Rather than trace the development of a rhetorical genre, critics describe the characteristics of apologia, campaign rhetoric, cerimonial rhetoric, jeremiad rhetoric, and so on.[33] When critics do tackle the growth of a particular genre, they tend to trace the patterns of images, metaphors, arguments, and structures found in discourse instead of the behaviors, events, and policies that may be a part of generic meanings.[34]

Critics using the method of fantasy theme analysis also examine "verbal discourse and mental constructs."[35] Bormann's study of Eagleton's resignation as vice presidential candidate to McGovern presents the situations of rhetors as portrayed through newspapers and television.[36] Bormann never lets go of the phrase "news events." He is examining news events rather than the events themselves. The events and situations that bring rhetoric into

being, or that rhetoric functions to create are an orchestration of words and ideas. There are no references to possible distinctions the public may make about what reporters said and what really happened. In fact, Bormann parenthetically states, "I am phrasing all issues and options in rhetorical terms and such important questions as the ability of the candidate as administrator are bypassed. My analysis focuses on symbolic action."[37] In response to the symbolic view of reality assumed in fantasy theme analysis and other dramatistic-type criticism, Gronbeck asks, are we treating an analogy when we say life is like drama or a real state of affairs?[38] Critics seem to suggest that all life pertaining to rhetoric is drama.

Critical focus on metaphors, genres, rhetorical visions, dramas, myths, and so on obscures distinctions between the creation of rhetoric and anything that is, or could be nonrhetorical. Fisher's concept "rhetorical fiction" encompasses all of the constructs used by critics. Fisher claims that all of these "rhetorical fictions are symbolic forms that range from figments to fabrications of the mind" and that "all these constructs deny human reality is a given."[39] Thus, some form of epistemological subjectivism underlies the diverse methods of psychosymbolic analysis that are mistakenly identified as pluralistic. According to contemporary criticism, the only "world of affairs" that is relevant to rhetoric is constructed of words and ideas.

"The psychosymbolic paradigm" has not arrived without objections.[40] Although critics periodically object to the dominance of the psychosymbolic perspective and advocate

historical, materialist, and ideological perspectives, such alternative perspectives have not been sufficiently incorporated into critical essays. By adhering to perspectives that do not acknowledge extrinsic components of rhetoric, the new paradigm of criticism falls short of presenting the total understandings that perspectivism encourages. More importantly the psychosymbolic paradigm prevents critics from successfully uniting the field of rhetorical studies with the actual practice of rhetoric.

III. "Relationships" Between the Practice of Rhetoric and the World of Affairs

In practice, rhetors and audiences often assume a distinction between rhetorical strategies and the world of affairs. The distinction does not preclude the world from participating in rhetoric. In fact, the assumed distinction between the rhetorical transaction and events that exist beyond the transaction may play an active role in rhetorical meaning. By virtually ignoring the possible distinctions, rhetorical critics cannot account for much of the meaning of rhetoric in practice. If the study of rhetoric is to be more than a scholarly pursuit; that is, more than the study of symbolic interactions isolated from their real world context, then critics must pursue the interactions between rhetorical practice and the world of affairs. This final section of the essay argues that an independent "world of affairs" is a part of the rhetorical experience.

For the public, distinctions between rhetorical events and events may be more meaningful than any distinction between an attitude and a value. That is not to say that the public does not succumb to the myths of rhetoric that result upon failure to acknowledge the difference between the world and the world as created in symbols.[41] In either case, it is one role of the critic to demonstrate the mutual relations that form between rhetoric and "the world of affairs."

Cherwitz and Hikins argue that acknowledging the role of relations among ontologically distinct entities avoids the epistemological quandaries embedded in the dualistic terms "object/subject," "mental/physical," "knower/known," "symbol/material." They claim that "the relation" "is the ontological cement gluing all entities together . . . be they abstract entities such as justice and goodness, empirical entities such as tables, chairs, and atoms, or conscious entities such as human beings."[42] Thus, by focusing upon the rhetorical relations among attitudes, beliefs, values, images, and "the world affairs," rhetorical critics can demonstrate the interdependence of these factors in meaning.

The notion of "relations" presently plays a vital role in the critical process of recreating meaning. Consistent with the philosophy of perspectivism as outlined by Brockriede, critics assume relational activity is essential to rhetorical meaning. When critics analyze the psycholinguistic configurations of fantasies, visions, genres, personas and the like, the following relationships are recurrent: opposing, symbolizing, causing, signifying, identifying, transforming, and associating.[43] Critics

might begin with these same relations when pursuing a role for the world of affairs in meaningful rhetoric.

The rhetoric of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant illustrates how the world of affairs may be distinguished from and yet participate in rhetorical meaning. The rhetoric of the accident includes the symbolic constructions or reconstructions of the event by the Soviet and American news media. Like many other "news events," the public distinguished between media coverage of the accident and the actual accident. Some of the variables that the public assumed to be extrinsic to rhetorical constructions include the following: nuclear power and nuclear power plants, policies that govern the building and maintenance of nuclear power plants, an explosion in the reactor core of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant 70 miles north of Kiev, the number of fatalities resulting from the explosion, a failure on the part of humans and/or equipment to be the cause of the explosion, radioactivity in the atmosphere around Chernobyl that has the potential to sweep across the world, and the dangerous effects of radioactivity. In order to demonstrate the many relations that may form between rhetoric and the world of affairs, the following examples will draw from both the Soviet and American publics.

The relation of "opposition" was important to the meaning of Chernobyl for Soviets and Americans who questioned the accuracy of media reports. There was much concern in the United States and other countries that Soviet reports of the accident were contrary to the actual severity of the situation. Initial reports by United Press International, that up to two thousand people died in

the accident, were and are considered to be in conflict with the actual number of fatalities.[44] Even the Soviet people probably assumed some difference between the rhetoric of Tass, the Soviet press agency, and the explosion at the Chernobyl plant.

"Opposing" relationships between attitudes, beliefs, values, images, and the objects of such psychosymbolic constructions are evident in many rhetorical transactions. The public often assumes the rhetoric of advertisers, politicians, and newscasters contradicts actuality and as such, the actuality participates in rhetoric.

Critics frequently identify symbols that function as signs of an attitudes, beliefs, and values. Psychosymbolic constructions may also "signify" events and events may "signify" a particular rhetorical strategy. The rhetoric of Soviet Union's response to Chernobyl is a good example of how rhetoric may signify an event beyond the rhetorical moment. According to the New York Times, a couple of days after the unreported explosion, Soviet television presented a history of nuclear accidents that have occurred throughout the world. For the Soviet people, the rhetoric of the evening news signaled the presence of an event unaccounted for in the news report: "The practice of focusing on disasters elsewhere when one occurs in the Soviet Union is so common that after watching a report on Soviet television about a catastrophe abroad, Russians often call Western friends to find out whether something has happened in the Soviet Union."[45] The role of signification most likely became stronger once the Soviets officially acknowledged the event and the world wide public looked for

signs, in the official response, of what had "really" occurred at Chernobyl.

It is ironic that critics rarely venture into the "causal" relations between rhetoric and the world of affairs since causative interactions often reveal the power of rhetoric in practical affairs.[46] The most extraordinary events and everyday incidents cause people to engage in rhetoric for contemplation and decision. The explosion at Chernobyl happened, in part, as an effect of prior rhetorics about the necessity for nuclear power, nuclear technology, and safety regulations.

The rhetoric that was created by the explosion could, in turn, generate events that will exist beyond the borders of "the rhetoric of Chernobyl."[47] For example, the "news events" may serve as an impetus for the anti-nuclear movement that could potentially result in a moratorium on nuclear power plants. Those caught up in the rhetoric of Chernobyl are aware that their rhetoric has consequences, and so they keep a watchful eye on the extrinsic effects of their symbols as they go about the practice of rhetoric.

"Symbolizing" is a relation used synonymously with representing. Critics most often point out words and images that represent ideas, beliefs, and values. But the psychosymbolic processes of rhetoric can also symbolize variables from the world of affairs, and objects and events can come to symbolize mental processes. The structural facility of the Chernobyl plant and the activity in the surrounding communities, for example, may come to represent the values created in the rhetorical response to the accident. If the plant were to close down or slow down its

operations, unemployment would increase. To those who pass through the affected neighborhood, the stalled plant and worried faces wandering the streets may function as a symbol for a hierarchy of values that placed technology before safety.

Reversing the extrinsic-intrinsic direction of symbolic relationships, the images on the nightly news depicting the blazing fire at Chernobyl are assumed to represent the real thing. Another example might involve a sketch of a skeleton that appears behind the television anchor when he or she discusses the fatalities at Chernobyl. The skeleton will symbolize death and arouse the television viewers' feelings of fear, beliefs about the uses of nuclear power, and the values of life and safety. The meaningfulness of the entire range of associations, however, will rest upon the audience's assumption that the deaths symbolized by the skeleton exist independently of the rhetorical process.

"Transformation" is a process of changing form. Burke describes this relation as one that moves "from" one form, "to" another form, "through" a third form.[48] Words, attitudes, and beliefs can be traced "from-through-to" events, policies, actions, and things. The people who died at Chernobyl become ideas in the words and thoughts of the public. Such psychosymbolic configurations might then transform themselves into the actions of people who will not eat anything but canned goods and scientists who have a new means for studying the effects of radiation. Transformation is the relation that probably best captures the "process" through which subjects and objects of rhetoric "become" synthesized.

Whereas "transformation" captures the process through which social realities and realities mingle, "identification" encompasses the interdependence. Identification is a relationship critics use synonymously with "equals" and "parallels." The seriousness, the impact, and the urgency of the special television news flashes about Chernobyl "parallel" these same qualities in the explosion. The rhetorical form of the news flashes compliment the physical relations of the Chernobyl disaster. Identification is almost a reversal of "opposition" for it relieves the tension between objective reality and social reality.[49] The critic who pinpoints relations of identification, does acknowledge the tension between the object and subject, for as Burke points out, every act of identification implies an act of division.[50]

The final relation that critics often describe in the context of psychosymbolic processes is "associating." Associating is employed as a general term to encompass any combination of the relations discussed. The abstraction of "association" suggests that it is not always possible to determine if various components of the psychosymbolic processes are linked by "signification," or "causation," or "transformation," and so on. Nor is it always possible to determine the precise link among the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of rhetoric. Criticism is not an exact science, and the inclusion of the "world of affairs" does not necessitate objectivity.

Although the above interpretation of the rhetoric of Chernobyl is cursory, it suggests that a distinction between the symbolic Chernobyl and the non-symbolic Chernobyl is an important part of the rhetorical transaction. That is not to say that all

critics should emphasize or even examine the role of "the world of affairs" in rhetoric. However, to better serve the theory and practice of rhetoric, and to be consistent with the principles of perspectivism, criticism must reflect a variety of epistemological viewpoints.

Most notably absent in contemporary criticism are those perspectives that acknowledge the ontological independence of social realities and objective realities. Since the many epistemological issues associated with the "the world of affairs" are not likely to be resolved in the near future, critics might look for "the world of affairs" in areas of agreement. Critics agree that rhetoric involves relationships.

The study of how rhetorical subjects and objects connect or relate is one way to make an independent "world of affairs" relevant to rhetoric. The ontological status of rhetorical subjects, objects, and their relationships is not less dubious than the distinctions and relations critics presently locate in mental processes.

If the study of rhetoric in contemporary times is to be a practical guide and reflection of the practice of rhetoric then critics cannot ignore "the world of affairs." Between the world of rhetoric and the world of affairs is the critic who must reveal and guide the connections between these two worlds. Richard Weaver has said "The end of living is activity not mere cognition."[51] Rhetoric has its place in all of living and so should rhetorical criticism.

[1] "Practical Challenges for Advocacy," Basic Education, Sept. 1985, p.1.

[2] The claims argued in this essay are based upon an intensive study of seventeen critical works conducted for another purpose. Although the purpose of this earlier work was somewhat different that the purpose of this essay, the content analysis was quite thorough. For the purposes of this essay, the original data has been supplemented with a review of critical essays published in major speech journals in the last ten years.

The original study is found in: Jodi R. Cohen, "Implicit Theories of Meaning in Rhetorical Criticism," Diss. The Pennsylvania State University 1984. The following bibliography is the sample of seventeen critical works examined in the dissertation: Arnold, Carroll C. "The Speech Style of Benjamin Disraeli." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 33 (1947), 427-436; Black, Edwin. "The Second Persona." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (1970), 109-119; Blankenship, Jane. "The Search for the 1972 Democratic Nomination: A Metaphorical Perspective." In Methods of Rhetorical Criticism. Ed. Robert L. Scott, and Bernard L.Brock. 2nd ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980, pp. 321-345; Bormann, Ernest G. "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 368-388; Brockriede, Wayne, and Robert L. Scott. "Reducing Rhetorical Distance: Krushchev's 1959 American Tour." In Methods, 2nd ed. pp. 211-241; Bryant, Donald C. "Burke's Present Discontents: The

Rhetorical Genesis of a Party Testament." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 32 (1956), 115-126; Burke, Kenneth. "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle." In Methods of Rhetorical Criticism. Ed. Robert L. Scott, and Bernard L. Brock. 1st ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1972, pp. 239-257; Frentz, Thomas S. and Janice Hocker Rushing. "The Rhetoric of 'Rocky': A Social Value Model of Criticism:" and "The Rhetoric of 'Rocky': Part Two." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 244-263; Hancock, Brenda Robinson. "Affirmation in the Women's Liberation Movement." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 447-457; Jamieson, Kathleen M. "Antecedent Genre as Rhetorical Constraint." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 61 (1975),406-415; Ling, David A. "A Pentadic Analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy's Address to the People of Massachusetts, July 25, 1969." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 360-368; Nichols, Marie Hochmuth. "Lincoln's First Inaugural." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 73-113; Osborn, Michael. "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light-Dark Family." In Methods, 1st ed., pp. 383-399; Rosenfield, Lawrence W. "A Case Study in Speech Criticism: The Nixon-Truman Analog." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 174-196; Stelzner, Herman G. "'War Message,' December 8, 1941: An Approach to Language." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 298-321; Ware, B. L., and Wil A. Linkugel. "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of Apologia." In Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 447-457; Wrage, Ernest J. "The Little World of Barry Goldwater." In Methods, 2nd ed. pp. 124-132.

The journals reviewed in the supplementary study include: The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 1977-1986; Communication Monographs, 1977-1986; Central States Speech Journal, 1977-1984;

Southern Speech Communication Journal, 1977-1986; Western Journal of Speech Communication, 1977-1986; Communication Quarterly, 1977-1986.

[3] Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," In Studies in Rhetoric and and Public Speaking in Honor of James A. Winans, ed. A. M. Drummond, (New York: Century, 1925).

[4] See Lester A. Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo Braden, Speech Criticism, 2nd ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1970), pp. 23-24; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Criticism: Ephemeral and Enduring," Speech Teacher, 23 (1974), 9-14; Edwin Black, "A Note on Theory and Practice in Rhetorical Criticism," WJSC, 44 (1980), 331-336.

[5] Some important early contributions to the revolution in the speech field include: Martin Maloney, "Some New Directions in Rhetorical Criticism," CSSJ, IV (1953), 1-5; Thomas Nilsen, "Criticism and Social Consequences," QJS, 42 (1956), 173-178; "Symposium: Criticism and Public Address," The Journal of the Western Speech Association, 21 (1957), 64-126; Phillip Tompkins, "Rhetorical Criticism: Wrong Medium?" CSSJ, 13 (1962), 90-95; Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965).

[6] "Symposium," JWSA.

[7] Black, Rhetorical Criticism, pp. 134-145.

[8] A review of the many methods of criticism generated between 1957, when the Western Speech Association held its first symposium on the state of the art, and 1980 is found in: "Special Report: Rhetorical Criticism: The State of the Art," WJSC, 44 (1980), 264-356.

[9] G. P. Mohrmann, "Elegy in a Critical Grave-Yard," WJSC, 44 (1980), 271.

[10] See Walter R. Fisher, "Method in Rhetorical Criticism," SSSJ, 35 (1969), 105; Brock and Scott, Methods, 2nd ed., pp. 467-471; Wayne Brockriede, "Constructs, Experience, and Argument," QJS, 71 (1985), 151-163; Michael Calvin McGee, "Another Philippic: Notes on the Ideological Turn in Criticism," CSSJ, 35 (1984), 47.

[11] Brockriede, "Constructs," p. 153.

[12] Brockriede, "Constructs," p. 153.

[13] McGee notes that "the clearest examples of perspectivist logic at work in rhetoric are the special issues of journals devoted to studying different stages of a campaign, different steps in the process of a particular discourse's production, or differnt parts of a naturally occurring social phenomenon." ("Another Philippic," p. 48).

[14] McGee, "Another Philippic," p. 47.

[15] Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 10.

[16] Many rhetorical scholars writing today use these terms interchangeably. See Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Rhetorical History and Rhetorical Criticism: A Distinction," ST, 24 (1975), 309-320; Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," QJS, 66 (1980), 1-16; Stephen E. Lucas, "The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship," QJS, 67 (1981), 1-20; Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, "Rhetorical Perspectivism," QJS, 69 (1983), 249-266;

[17] Many issues enter into the controversy on the role of "the world of affairs" in rhetorical criticism, including: What is the ontological and epistemological nature of "the world of affairs"? and What is the relationship between the rhetorical critic and "the world of affairs"? Often, in the literature, these issues are not separated. Some of the major critical essays that debate these issues include the following: Robert R. Newman, "Under the Veneer: Nixon's Vietnam Speech on November 3, 1969," QJS, 56 (1970), 168-178; Richard H. Kendall, "A Reply to Newman," QJS, 56 (1970), 432-435; Newman, "A Reply to Kendall," QJS, 56 (1970), 435-436; Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom--Traditional Form--The President's Message on November 3, 1969," QJS, 58 (1972), 370-385; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "A Rejoinder," QJS, 58 (1972), 451; Hill, "Reply to Professor Campbell," QJS, 58 (1972), 451-460; Philip Wander and Stephen Jenkins, "Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response," QJS, 58 (1972), 441-450; Lawrence Rosenfield, "The Experience of Criticism," QJS, 60 (1974), 489-496; Philip Wander, "The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism," CSSJ, 34 (1983), 1-18; "Special Reports: Responses to Wander," CSSJ, 34 (1983), 114-127; "Special Reports," CSSJ, 35 (1984), 43-60; Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," CSSJ, 35 (1984), 197-216.

[18] Leff concluded that questions about the relationship between rhetoric and knowing underlie all contemporary rhetorical studies: Michael Leff, "In Search of Adriadnes' Thread: A Review of the Recent Literature on Rhetorical Theory," CSSJ, 29 (1971), 73-91.

[19] Cherwitz and Hikins, "Perspectivism," 249.

[20] Cherwitz and Hikins obviously simplify the debate over the epistemic nature of rhetoric. The important point in this essay is that the overwhelming majority of critical essays do not distinguish between the subjects and objects of rhetoric. Some critics may not acknowledge the ontological distinction and others may accept the subject--object distinction but believe that rheoric is only concerned with subjective experiences.

[21] Cohen, "Implicit Theories," chap. 2.

[22] For a review and bibliography of the literature addressing the relationship between symbols and psychological processes see, Gary Chronkhite, "Perception and Meaning," in Handbook of Rhetorical and Communication Theory, ed. Carroll C. Arnold and John Waite Bowers, (Newtom, Mass: Allyn and Bacon Inc.), pp. 51-229.

[23] W. Lance Bennett, "The Ritualistic and Pragmatic Bases of Political Campaign Discourse," QJS, 63 (1977), 220.

[24] This claim is based upon a review of all critical works addressing presidential campaigns that were published in the major speech journals between 1977 and 1986. See end note #2.

25 Walter R. Fisher, "Rhetorical Fiction and the Presidency," QJS, 66 (1980), 119-126; Barry Brummett, "Gastronomic Reference, Synedoche, and Political Images," QJS, 67 (1981), 138-145; Lance Bennett, "Assessing Presidential Character: Degradation Rituals in Presidential Campaigns," QJS, 67 (1981), 310-321.

[26] There are exceptions to the psychosymbolic approach in contemporary rhetorical criticism: most notably is McGee's and others works on "ideographs," and some criticism that utilizes the methods of critical social theorists. However, as Francesconi suggests in his review of the implications of Habermas's theory of legitimation to rhetorical criticism, critics often neglect the material/economic components of Habermas's theory (Robert Francesconi, "The Implications of Habermas's Theory of Legitimation For Rhetorical criticism," CM, 53 (1986), 22.) Traditional critics did not satisfactorily intergrate "the world of affairs" into their interpretations but contrary to contemporary criticism, neoAristotelian works included discussion of a distinct world of affairs. These "discussions," however, did not reveal the interactions between "the world of affairs" and rhetoric.

[27] Black, "Second Persona."

[28] Osborn, "Archetypal Metaphor," p. 385.

[29] Blankenship, "Democratic Nomination," p. 324.

[30] Thomas Pyles and John Algeo, English: An Introduction to Language (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1970), pp. 184-187.

[31] Pyles and Algeo, English, p. 185.

[32] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, ed., Form and Genre (Va: Speech Communication Association, n.d.), p. 26.

[33] Walter R. Fisher, "Genre: Concepts and Applications in Rhetorical Criticism," WJSC, 44 (1980), 295.

[34] See McGee, "Another Philippic," pp. 49-50, for a similar critique of generic criticism.

[35] Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Dramaturgical Theory and Criticism: The State of the Art (or Science?)," WJSC, 44 (1980), 324.

[36] Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair."

[37] Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair," p. 384.

[38] Gronbeck, "Dramaturgical," p. 328.

[39] Walter R. Fisher, "Rhetorical Fiction," p. 121.

[40] See McGee, "The 'Ideograph'"; Lucas, "The Schism"; Francesconi, "The Implications."

[41] The term "myth" is herein used to denote meanings that lack tension between a signifier and the signified. See Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 142.

[42] Cherwitz and Hikins, "Perspectivism," p. 258.

[43] Cohen, "Implicit Theories," pp. 58-66.

[44] United Press International; News Wire Service, April 29, 1986.

[45] Serge Schmemann, "Soviet Announces Nuclear Accident at Electric Plant," New York Times, National ed., 29 April 1986, Sec. 1, p. 6, col. 2.

[46] Lucas reviews and responds to arguments favoring the elimination of the study of rhetorical effects from criticism, in "The Schism," pp. 7-10.

[47] In theory it is impossible to draw borders around a given rhetorical transaction, but in the practice of criticism borders must be drawn so that the rhetorical act is managable.

[48] Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 11.

[49] The relations may be put on a continuum representing the degree to which extrinsic and intrinsic substances merge. "Opposition" may be the most divisive relationship and "identification," the most synthetic.

[50] Burke, Rhetoric, p. 45

[51] Richard Weaver, "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric," in Contemporary Rhetoric, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Ill: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), p. 299.